GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:151
ANSWERED ON:25.07.2005
GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD PRODUCTS
Jagannath Dr. M.

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the study report carried out by the American multi-national food giant, Monsanto pointing out serious ill effects of genetically modified food products on health as reported in the Hindu, June 04, 2005 under the caption `Imported soy, corn products may be harmful`;

(b) if so, whether the Government propose to put a ban on the release of GM food in the Indian markets as requested by various civil society groups and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA)

(a) Yes, Sir. The Government is aware of the report which appeared in the `Hindu` on June 04, 2005, however the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India which is the nodal Ministry for regulation of Genetically Modified Organisms has not received any adverse report regarding harmful impact of genetically modified food on human health.

(b)&(c): All genetically modified organisms and products thereof are regulated in India under the Rules for the Manufacture, Use, Import, And Export And Storage Of Hazardous Micro Organisms Genetically Engineered Organisms Or Cells, 1989, framed under the provisions of The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. These rules provide that all food stuffs, ingredients in food stuffs and additives including processing aids containing or consisting of genetically engineered organisms or cells, shall not be produced, sold, imported or used except with the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC). Introduction of any new technology requires a careful evaluation of the long-term sustainable benefits/impacts. Therefore the Government is following a policy of case-by-case approval of GM products. As per the prescribed biosafety guidelines all genetically modified food are required to be tested for toxicity and allergencity prior to its approval for human consumption. As of date the GEAC has not approved the import or production of GM food for consumption in the Country. The guidelines for testing of the food products at the point of entry are notified under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954.